

Men struggle at tourney

BY BRENT FOSTER
Staff Reporter

The golf team got a feel this week for how tough the MIAA is going to be this season.

The Bulldogs wrapped up the two-day Missouri Western State University Tournament in St. Joseph on Tuesday. The 'Dogs finished in last place in the nine-team field, 11 shots behind eighth-place Rockhurst University (Mo.).

Junior Scott Danielsen shot a pair of 77s and tied for the team lead. Freshman Chris Kovach also carded a 154 for Truman. Kovach shot a 74 in round 1 but followed with an 80 in the second round.

The tournament was the second MIAA scoring event this spring. Head coach Kevin White said he puts more emphasis on these events.

"I hate to call them majors, but you know the golf counter you have [on] majors," White said. "The MIAA events, you should consider those your majors. Those are the ones that are going to help you if you are going to get to regionals. The last few years we've gone to regionals based on being able to beat teams in the MIAA."

Danielsen said he was a little upset with the way he played.

"I shot the same thing I've been shooting the last three tournaments in a row, which is extremely disappointing," Danielsen said. "I shot 77 today. I shot 77 yesterday. For some reason I just can't seem to break 77. I'm playing way better than I'm shooting."

Weather conditions hampered the event from the start. Temperatures dropped 20 degrees into the 40s while the Bulldogs were on the course Monday. The wind changed direction and remained



File Photo

Junior Scott Danielsen competes in a tournament last fall. Danielsen fired a two-day 154 at the Mo. West. Tournament.

at about 20 miles per hour. The wind chill never reached above 30 degrees while Truman was on the course Tuesday.

"Coach always said we have a 70 [degrees] and sunny swing, and then we should have our other swing," Danielsen said. "We just get on the range and practice the other swing, which is keeping it low, keeping it under the wind. The big thing is being able to swallow your pride and pulling the longer iron out."

Washburn won the team title with an eight-under-par 568. Missouri Southern State Univer-

sity finished in a distant second place with a five-over-par 581.

Last week, the Bulldogs competed in the Heart of America Classic in Warrensburg. Truman finished in a tie for eighth in the 11-team event with a two-day total of 625.

Kovach fueled the effort by shooting a 78 on the first day and a 75 on day two. He finished in a tie for 21st, and Danielsen finished tied for 28th after carding a pair of 77s.

"We didn't play like we are capable of, but in their regard, it's still early in the season,"

White said. "It's only the second tournament of the year. It's still one of the few times we've been able to get outside and play. We're disappointed, and we're working hard this week."

Kovach said he had trouble with his short game on day one.

"The second day I didn't quite hit the ball as well, missed some greens, but my short game was a lot better," Kovach said. "I was getting up and down and making a lot more putts and everything. I think that made the difference from a 78 to a 75."

White said there aren't a lot of adjustments golfers can make between rounds.

"You get the practice round on Sunday," White said. "It's not like you are showing up at these two-day events and the first day is an actual competition. You know what you are expecting. ... We have a young team in that regard, in that they don't know what some of these courses are, but I have the knowledge of them. And again, the practice round is invaluable in what they can see."

Washburn won the event with a five-over-par 573. The University of Central Missouri was a close second with an eight-over-par 576.

Washburn's John Robbins was the only golfer to finish under par. He took home the individual title, shooting two under par.

Despite the struggles, Truman remains in fifth place in the conference, one point ahead of sixth-place Fort Hays State University.

The Bulldogs have one MIAA event remaining this season before regionals, the MIAA tournament April 21-22 in Branson.

The Bulldogs will hit the links again Friday and Saturday at Western Illinois University in a non-MIAA event.

TRUMAN ATHLETICS News and Notes

Rugby: Bulls spend weekend in roller rink

Truman men's club rugby roughed it last weekend at the Wayne State Tournament. Instead of hotel arrangements, the team chose to spend the night in a roller skating rink.

"Most of us didn't get in until about midnight on Friday night, so the other teams were there," junior Justin Lacy said. "I think there were close to 10 other teams staying in the roller rink."

Junior Dustin Ralph said the accommodations were not the best.

"What this college that was putting up the tournament had set up for us was this really crappy roller skating rink," he said. "There were neon lights, and the wood floor was all splintered. It was five dollars for two nights just for a little portion duct-taped off [in a] square for us to all sleep in."

Ralph said it was difficult to get rest with that many rugby players staying in one place.

"Everyone was like yelling and screaming," he said. "People were sneaking drinks in all night, and everyone was pretty rowdy until 2:30, until they finally went to sleep. I think we'll pass on that for the next time we get a hotel, even though it costs more."

Baseball: Senior catcher slumping at plate

Senior catcher Matt Over — the baseball team's top hitter a year ago — continues to struggle at the plate this season.

After an 0-for-6 showing at the plate last weekend in a series against Missouri Western State University, Over is now hitting .174. He also has struck out a team-high 16 times after fanning just 12 times all of last season.

"It's not so much Matt — it's that everybody is going to pitch him really tough," head coach Dan Davis said. "They're going to lock in on him. He was our best hitter last year, and they're going to not let him beat them. That's the big thing."

Over led Truman with a .330 batting average and .431 on-base percentage last season.

Softball: Bulldogs in regional rankings

The Truman softball team was ranked third in the North Central Region Div. II standings as of last week.

Southwest Minnesota State University is ranked first, and Emporia State University is ranked second. The University of Nebraska-Omaha and Northwest Missouri State University are four and five, respectively. Emporia State currently is No. 19 and Minnesota St. is No. 23 in the nation.

The Bulldogs lost three of four games against Minnesota State earlier this season, and they will play Emporia in a league home game April 18th.

Truman might drop in the rankings because of a losing record in the past week.

Women's tennis remains unbeaten, men earn sweep

BY JOE BELL
Staff Reporter

As conference and regional play are beginning to heat up, so are the Bulldog tennis teams.

On Saturday, March 29, the tennis teams made their way to Hays, Kan., where the women continued their perfect season by beating Fort Hays State University 7-2 and Colorado Christian University 9-0.

By winning those two matches, the women are now 12-0 on the season and 2-0 in MIAA conference play.

In their first match, the women squared off against Fort Hays in a dual match where they succeeded in taking two of three doubles matches and captured wins in every singles match except for the No. 4 spot. That match, between freshman Bulldog Kelsey Kuykendall and Mary Kate Mckee of Fort Hays, was close, with the women splitting sets (6-4, 3-6), and Mckee coming out with the win in a tie break (10-6).

The women continued their success by sweeping their next match against Colorado Christian. The Bulldogs all won by a large margin. Colorado Christian failed to win more than two games in any of the matches except for the No. 1 doubles spot, the match played by Bulldog juniors Lindsay Blair and Courtney Walther, which came out to a score of 8-5.

"Courtney and I struggled focusing at the beginning of the match," Blair said. "It started off pretty close, and the last couple of games we got out in a lead. They were good players, but mostly, it

was just Courtney and I needed to stay focused throughout the whole match. We've been doing pretty well through the season about [staying focused], but we lost a little focus in that match at the beginning."

The men swept their match against Colorado Christian 9-0. The doubles matches played by the No. 1 pair, sophomores Kyle Schlotz and John Rothfusz, and the No. 3 pair, sophomores Steve Hipkiss and Ben Rusk, were close, with scores of 8-5 and 9-7, respectively.

The men's singles matches were all solid victories, with the exceptions of No. 2 Hipkiss and No. 3 senior Cody Pusateri. Hipkiss won his first set (6-1) soundly but won his second set by a narrow margin (7-5). Pusateri dropped his first set (4-6), but won the next set and the tie-breaker to win his match (6-0, 10-4).

The victory against Colorado Christian increases the men's record to 9-2 for the season and 1-0 in MIAA conference play.

The matches against the University of Nebraska-Kearney March 30 were cancelled due to rain and currently aren't being rescheduled.

The tennis teams also played a match against conference opponent Emporia State University on March 20. The men won their match against Emporia, 6-3, and the women won their meet in a close score, 5-4.

The men won all three doubles matches against Emporia but managed to only win three of their singles matches. The women won one of the

three doubles matches they played against Emporia and won four of the singles matches against their conference rival.

"It was the first time in five years that the women had beaten [Emporia]," head coach Pete Kendall said. "[Emporia] was ranked No. 1 in the region and 24 in the country at the time."

As of March 31, the men's tennis team was ranked at No. 6 in the Div. II North Central Region. The doubles tandem of Schlotz and Rothfusz was ranked at No. 8, and sophomore Peter Bracha, who was out at the beginning of the season with a wrist injury, was ranked as the No. 10 singles player in the region.

"[The wrist injury] is getting better," Bracha said. "I'm just doing physical therapy for that. ... [My doctor], at the beginning of break, was able to get me in quickly and just got it taken care of."

The women's team currently is ranked at No. 3 in the region, with the doubles teams of Blair and Walther ranked at No. 5 and senior Jennifer Salmon and freshman Amy Ochs ranked at No. 10. In singles, Salmon is ranked at No. 8 and Blair at No. 10.

The tennis teams look to increase their rankings in the upcoming weeks as their schedules get increasingly tougher. Today, the women's tennis team squares off against Missouri Western State University (2-6).

Both teams square off against Northwest Missouri State University Saturday, and Sunday the teams take on Missouri Valley College.



Nathan Becker/Index

Senior No. 1-ranked singles player Jennifer Salmon competes in a match earlier this spring. Salmon picked up two singles victories last Friday, improving her singles record to 17-6. The women's tennis team is 12-0.

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